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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the migration process, and emphasizes the role of women, focusing on the degree to which marginality is not simply a residual effect of, but is a significant casual force for adaptation, in its successful outcome, however that may be defined in individual cases. The migration process is reviewed using data from working class Azoreans and Azorean immigrants, a segment of those Atlantic islands Portuguese who constitute the American Portuguese. This paper suggests that women are just as important as males but that their importance has been ignored and their roles as humans have been treated as limited, trivial and inconsequential. The paper presents the position that Portuguese immigrant women are marginal but that despite this marginality; in fact, because of it, she utilizes that position in a positive fashion, especially to improve the economic potential of her family. Positive aspects of marginality especially among Portuguese females are best demonstrated by the institution of "cunha" which occurs when a person goes to someone and asks him/her to "put in a plug for us with so and so". The process of making a "cunha" leads to the formation of a social network. The important point to note is that marginality of a special kind is required if the adaptive potential of networks and of "cunha" making is to be maximized. In conclusion, it is noted that Portuguese women adapt, except when they must not, she must place the nuclear household first but is prepared to work outside, she should carry an equal share of family burdens but should play deference to the senior male, she must make new friends but maintain old ties, and she must maintain her position at the core while living constantly on the fringe. (Author/AM)

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The Portuguese female immigrant: 'Marginal Man' par excellence.

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Almost 50 years ago a concept was introduced which was so powerful in its imagery and evocative qualities that it became a basic term in the scientific literature and quickly found a place in the vocabulary of the lay public as well. Both term and description were conceived by Robert Park, a major figure in American sociology who, in a seminal paper, discussed the effects of 'Human migration....' He focused on a type which, in the climate of the times, was androcentrically defined as 'the marginal man' and was portrayed as follows:

> [This was] a man living and sharing intimately in the culture, life and traditions of two distinct peoples; never quite willing to break, even if he were permitted to do so, with his past and its traditions, and not quite accepted...in the new society in which he sought to find a place. He was a man on the margin of two cultures and two societies, which never completely interpenetrated and fused.
>
> ..[T]he conflict of cultures...is just the conflict of the 'divided self,' the old self and the new. And frequently there is no satisfying issue of this conflict, which often terminates in a profound disillusionment...wavering between the warm security of the ghetto...and the cold freedom of the outer world, in which he is not yet quite at home....
>
> Something of the same sense of moral dichotomy and conflict is probably characteristic of every immigrant during the period of transition, when old habits are being discarded and new ones are not yet formed. It is inevitably a period of inner turmoil and intense self-consciousness (1928:888-9, italics mine).

This vivid and dramatic picture of the immigrant caught the imagination of scholars. It was representative of the internal strain and external stress which perhaps all of us experience in a new setting--say, when we change neighborhoods or start another job. It

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reminded some of the trauma they or their parents had faced when they came to America; and it allowed others to empathize with and expand upon the difficulties which immigrants have to face but with which they personally were unfamiliar.

Without any intent to minimize the importance of Park's original contribution it must be stated that, as others have pointed out (Green, 1947-1948; Golovensky, 1951), the model has certain weaknesses. As has already been indicated, it was biased by certain assumptions and these biases become particularly obvious when one tries to apply it to an analysis of the immigrant female since Park stressed the perspective that immigrant life was male dominated, male focused, and that the primary goal of this male was to conform to the new system in which he found himself.

Further, for Park (and most others) marginality was basically undesireable. A marginal man is schizophrenic man. He is never completely whole at any given time and is torn by conflicting norms, thus giving full allegiance to none. A marginal individual is never at home in one sphere or the other--he is simply 'on the fence' always apart, never integrated.

Thus, however long the period an individual defines himself and/or is so categorized as 'immigrant,' so long will the host society treat as a social fact the maladjustment of fit that must characterize his interactions with the macrosystem.

These viewpoints have had important repercussions and not a few programs have been formulated to facilitate immigrant assimilation predicated on the emphasis placed on the negatively marginal male on the propositions that traditional patterns and the new setting are, to a large extent, disconsonant; and that this dissonance would be

minimized or eliminated when the immigrant adapted, with the male being the locus of and the key to understanding those adaptations.

Unfortunately, this position is too bounded since it explains both too much and too little. Further, it represents only one type of reality. Negative marginality and the conflict it produces does exist and exists to such an extent that it affects not only immigrants but every human being at some time or another. All of us have had moments at which we feel on the edge of things, on the fringe, left out, not fully understanding 'what the joke is and why everybody else is laughing.' It is, in fact, one of the tragedies of life in the modern mega-state that citizens of those mammoth structures often feel marginal to the dynamic mainstream of economic or political vectors. We not occasionally feel that 'they' are really controlling everyone's life, that 'they' belong to some clique, cabal, or in-group from which we are excluded and to which we are marginal.

But few of us live in a constant or even significant state of marginality. Whatever 'normalcy' really is, one way it may be defined is as a state in which individuals and societies have a derived potential for positive feedback---'things are OK and we're going to make it.'

The concept of the marginal man is similar to the Hollywood types of the Good Guys and the Bad Guys; they are really only ideal types, used to simplify the presentation of a drama. This archetype of negative marginality, however, minimizes positive factors (though Park does mention this) and skews the fact that it is possible to see differences as something other than paradoxical and thus conflicting. Differences may also be seen as complementary--as opening up alternatives, offering different choices in different situations,

maximizing possible options. This paper will stress the latter focus.

It has been the current upsurge of research with immigrants in various parts of the world that has led scholars to re-examine the entire process of migration. The resulting data have emphasized that, in order to understand the dynamics of population movements, one must take a broad historical view, use a holistic perspective, and weigh all participants equally--men and women, young and old, those who leave, those who stay, and those who are the hosts.

Viewed from this vantage point it is easy to see that women--and in this case Portuguese women particularly--play an extremely important role in the migratory process. This is true <u>even when they themselves are not emigrants</u>.

Thus, it is important to begin our study not with the newly arrived but with the background to departure, and all of those involved in the departure. Whatever happens to an individual in the new locale is the result of vectors which are set into motion long before that person ever leaves home. Emigration is an individualized act but the decision to move--how, when, where, what, and why--is determined by many personnel and structured by complex forces (cf., Petersen, 1958).

In tracing the lengthy operation, beginning in some cases many years before departure takes place (and, for some of my respondents, still on-going), I found over and over again that women were not simply the passive stay-at-homes, or the docile followers of their menfolk. Nor were they isolated and fearful homebodies in a hostile new setting, or keepers of the flame of tradition. I found that for every woman who was prompted by the male and followed willingly or regretfully, there were two who resisted and forced him to remain where he was; and there were 5 who had been the initiators of the idea, mothers, sisters, wives

or daughters who worked at cajoling or pressuring males into taking the lead, or forcing them, reluctantly, to make the move. Women were often the pushers, the naggers, the needlers, the schemers, the manipulators, the innovators, the security blankets, and the teachers. All of this becomes especially interesting when one considers that Portugal is supposedly a classic example of the male-dominated society.

And this leads me to emphasize three caveats. First, I am trying to redress an imbalance. I am not arguing that males are passive, non-innovative, and tools primed for action by those gray eminences, the women behind the thrones. What I do wish to stress, however, is that women are <u>just as</u> important as males--but their importance has been ignored, their structural significance has been perverted, and their roles as humans have been treated as limited, trivial and inconsequential.

Second, I must caution that these data come primarily from working class Azoreans and Azorean emigrants, a segment of those Atlantic islands Portuguese who constitute the American Portuguese. It may be that the significance of the female in this stratum is maximized vis-a-vis the total sociocultural system. Just as the niceties of 'proper' female existence during the Victorian period applied only to middle and upper class situations, and not to the women who, bared to the waist, worked side by side with men in the Welsh coal mines, so it may be that the sheltered and passive female of Mediterranean culture is found only among the bourgeoisie and/or aristocracy.

Finally, it is possible that these data are skewed by the socio-economic position of the Azores in relation to the mainland. The Atlantic islands are impoverished, grossly overcrowded, and relegated to an exploited hinterland position by the Lisboan elite who control the economy and governmental policy. Where competition for scarce

resources is intense, women always play a more significant part in subsistence and economic activities.

With these cautions in mind, let us look at the migration process, emphasizing for heuristic purposes the role of women, and focusing on the degree to which marginality is not simply a residual effect of, but is a significant causal force for adaptation--in its successful outcome however that may be defined in individual cases. In the three mini-studies which follow note particularly the way in which a female will play upon and accentuate culturally prescribed role behavior; the way in which she is employed by others to gain their own ends; and the degree to which it is friends and kin of the female who perform valuable and necessary functions.

In case number one Mr. J was the owner of a small business in a town close enough to Ponta Delgada to be considered a suburb of the city. When her only son was about 14, Mrs. J began to express concern that the time would come that he would be 'taken from her' to fight the African wars. Despite strong resistance on the part of Mr. J and three female children, the family finally emigrated. Mrs. J won the day just prior to her son's 18th birthday and all agree it was due to her doleful manners, constant complaints, and series of minor illnesses because, 'like any good mother' she was getting sicker and sicker with worry. Mr. J and the children point to the fact that, loving and honoring Mrs. J in her status as wife/mother, they had to respect her concern, cater to her 'natural fears' and recognize the legitimacy of her argument that the family name must be preserved.

Importantly, the U.S. city in which they now live was chosen because Mrs. J's favorite cousin, who had emigrated many years before, is now an important member of the Roman Catholic clergy in that locale.

It was he who arranged for housing, work for the husband, and schools for the children prior to their arrival.

Case number two concerns Amalia P. Born in this country during the depression of the 1930's, she and her family returned to the islands shortly after her birth because jobs were not available for her parents--and her grandfather had died leaving a small farm. The post-war boom of the 1950's again attracted Mr. P and the entire family returned to the United States using Amalia's status as a natural citizen of this country to gain entry. Later, a maternal aunt wished her son to emigrate and so Amalia was pressured by her parents into an arranged marriage with a cousin whom she had never seen in order to facilitate his entry. Even now, 12 years after the marriage Amalia still resents it--and the way she was used by the older generation to further achievement of <u>their</u> goals.

In the last case, Mrs. R longed to leave the Azores because friends and relatives in Brazil wrote her constantly of the good life they were living in a place where 'times were good and there was as much land as any farmer could want.' She and her husband discussed the move and after several years of vacillating he agreed to emigrate--the delay having been caused by his concern about learning new agricultural techniques.

Unfortunately, Mrs. R soon realized that, for her, the move to Brazil had been a mistake. To be sure, there was land aplenty, but it was frontier land, isolated and remote. As she put it, 'It wasn't the lack of neighbors, though that was bad. And I worried about schools and hospitals, but that could change. But there wasn't any church! I never even got to see people on <u>Sunday</u>! And no confession, or communion, or way to pray at the altar'!

Finally, she convinced her husband to let her take the children and visit her brother and his family in Toronto. Once there, she obtained a job and took the status of illegal immigrant rather than return to her husband in Brazil. Lonely, confused and unable to manage the house and the ranch chores, Mr. R finally joined his wife and children.

Their status as immigrants has now been regularized and both are working, Mr. R doing highly paid construction work. He deeply regrets leaving Brazil and 'giving up the independence of a farmer's life.' He often speaks of the day that he and his wife will buy a farm in rural Ontario. Privately, Mrs. R told me that she liked her present life and had no intention of ever allowing the family 'to move back to the hard work and loneliness of farm life.'

The significance of the female in the three cases just discussed is not unique. For example, data from one study revealed that in 85% of my cases (N=127; 85%=108) a female either instigated the move or gave it strong support; in only 15% of the cases (=19) was a move made despite her objections. Further, a majority of the moves (=66) was made to locales where the female had kin and the male had none, giving strong support to the hypothesis that the female's connections are a significant variable in determining locale.

The data also reveal that women are important in ways other than 'simply' determining whether to move, when, and where. They are the ones who do the major share of the planning and arranging that must begin <u>after</u> the decision has been made but <u>prior</u> to emigration. Most of the leg work (literally!) is done by women. They are the ones who walk, hitchhike in from isolated rural areas, or take interminable bus trips so as to spend interminable waits in offices to get papers written,

papers signed, certificates prepared, and documents stamped. They must track down information to give, and find out what information is needed.

The process of leaving a community is just as difficult as joining a new one, and many arrangements must be made, many loose ends must be tied up, many friends and kin must be reassured that the absence will not sever close ties. Often financial aid must be obtained; furniture and valuables must be shipped or stored; arrangements must be made to care for elderly parents or other kin, for houses, lands, graves and even occasionally the collection of rents.

All of these tasks fall primarily on the women for, it is argued, men cannot take time from their work, especially at a time when finances are crucial. So it is up to women to perform these countless tasks, the waiting and the wading through the bureaucratic morass. Obviously, during this period the female is more intimately, immediately and constantly reminded that she is no longer occupying a stable niche but is marginal to old and new, past and future. She is operating in two worlds for familiar, routine tasks must still be performed but are now minimized in importance because new patterns of 'planning for tomorrow' are equally important or become paramount.

Again, even when dealing with case histories of single male immigrants, conversations revealed that it was women--mothers, sisters, aunts, female cousins, godmothers--who bore a large burden of the department arrangements. As Joe P. put it, "It wasn't only that Mama was the one who wanted me to move; she was the one who set everything up for me, fought the government, got the papers signed--and packed me a lunch to eat on the plane when I left.'

Whether they personally emigrate or not, it is clear that those

women who view migration as a desirable alternative for themselves or their kin, are already marginal. They have become discontented with the usual pattern and traditions of daily life, with the long range potential of life in that environment. They have stood back and looked at their familiar life with an objective and, ultimately, critical eye. They have hopes and aspirations which do not 'fit' with those of their neighbors and family who opt to stay at home. Such women are looking at and imagining life within another system--one which operates differently from the one in which they now exist. They have gone to the margins of their familiar world and see that other pastures do indeed look greener--a condition which can only occur if one moves to the fringes of one's own field. And, since those who are most marginal do in fact usually emigrate, an important side effect of the migration process has been an increase in the conservatism of the sending community. Those who do not emigrate are those who are either satisfied with the status quo, or believe that 'the system is the system' no matter where one lives, that moving will not alter the monolithic durability of that system. The stay-at-homes are thus less likely to want or expect innovation and changes.

Returning to the complexities of migratory planning, we have already noted that deciding to leave is not enough, one must also decide where to go. Here, too, women are functionally significant. It is often their contacts, at home as well as in potential target locales, their information, and their assurances of assistance which have major input into the decision-making process. When I <u>initially</u> questioned males about this I found that the vast majority negated or minimized the role of women in determining ultimate destination. Yet they simultaneously gave data which demonstrated the functional importance of female

facilitators. When this was pointed out to them, males would often give a casual shrug and the conversation would terminate with a remark such as, "Oh well, women love to meddle and gossip so you might as well put it to some good use.'

A few males were genuinely surprised and somewhat chagrined when the degree of their dependency was pointed out: 'I never thought of that but, you know, you're right. I guess I never figured out how much it all added up to.'

More importantly, perhaps, women themselves minimized their decision-making significance. Such behavior was commonplace and trivial and, as one woman remarked in a somewhat bewildered fashion, 'But that's how my mother and grandmother and all the women did things and nobody--not even them!--ever thought they were important, like the men.' One is reminded of the husband who said, 'My wife and I are old-fashioned; she decides about small things and I decide about big things. She decides how to spend my pay and I decide whether we should continue the space program.'

When the decision has been made as to when and where to move but still prior to departure, the woman will often turn to making arrangements in the host community. In this she will often use the assistance of other women in the new locale. One must be met upon arrival and transported to the final destination; there are living arrangements to be made--temporary lodgings or an apartment and, if the latter, furnishings; employment; and advance information about climate, clothing, money required to establish one's self (such as deposits for utilities). And now the host women must also think marginally. They must try to see the familiar surroundings as a stranger, as an immigrant would see them, for it is this which allows the host women to help plan and provide

for the various exigencies which will arise.

Not only can an overlooked opportunity in the new setting make the difference between success and failure; one's native hearth must also be taken into account for future return. The plans for maintaining such ties are important since, in interviewing 127 immigrants who had been here less than 10 years, 52 stated that they planned to return 'home' eventually. They stressed that they were as concerned about maintaining natal ties as they were in 'making good' in their new residence. In fact, 'doing well' was often motivated by a desire to end what was perceived as a kind of exile as soon as possible. Thus, even a minor oversight in the holding arrangements in the natal community can minimize or completely wipe out the availability of a niche to which to return.

> As Mr. and Mrs. S told me:
>
> We didn't have much time in these last few weeks so we told my friend we couldn't go to his village for his daughter's christening. Boy! Did that hurt us! When we went home for a visit two years later we found every one against us.
>
> Our neighbors had heard how stuck-up we'd got; how we wrote letters making fun of our old friends and bragging how smart we were to go and how dumb they were to stay. None of that was true but that's what our best friends said about us. And even what we didn't do, they twisted. They said we had become American and cheap with our money. They said that's why we didn't send money for prayers or better presents. Nobody really believed us--and it.... it hurt us that they would think that anyway. We don't feel the same anymore--about how nice it will be going home, I mean. Just that one thing had all that power to change how people feel.

Statistics are wellnigh impossible to obtain on this, but I would suggest that if one could get the data it would emerge that Portuguese immigrants show an extremely high rate of either home tourism or what I am calling retromigration (defined as the 'permanent' return of an emigrant to his home--wherever he perceives that place to be) to their natal country. The Portuguese explain this by reference to saudade but,

of course, the nostalgia for idealized old times and the desire to retain one's roots are universal phenomena, not a unique feature of Portuguese culture. In any case, the high potential of repetitive visits or permanent return demands a preparation for leave taking which is as careful and thorough as that required for settlement in the new locale. Most travelers plan each step to the fullest extent possible; it is a matter of basic survival (cf., Tilly and Brown, 1968). The myth that people simply 'go' is as fallacious as that which implies they simply 'arrive.'

Upon arriving in the new home, the first trauma of adjustment falls as heavily on the woman as any other immigrant. This is especially true if she is wife and/or mother. She must adapt to a whole range of new demands while offering her family the security of familiar ways. The argument that women can minimize cultural adjustment and culture shock by 'hiding' in the house is sheer nonsense. Even if a female moves into an ethnic enclave of her own kind, one where she is surrounded by kin and friends from the same or a similar native locale, she still must adapt. Let me phrase the problems of this period in the same biased terms--though from the opposite perspective--which marks much of the male focused literature on the newly-arrived immigrant.

A male is required first and foremost to get a job and get to work. Usually the job has been prearranged (often by friends or kin of a female of his family) and not uncommonly even transportation is provided by a work mate. If he can make these arrangements and, in the process acquires a specialized work vocabulary of some 200-300 words, he is viewed as 'successfully assimilating.'

The woman meanwhile must walk the town block by block to learn her way around; she must learn to cope with the public transportation

system; to get, not to one place repetitively as in the case of the male, but a number of places. There are markets; the school (or schools); shops for furniture, clothing, appliances; various local and federal governmental offices; repair services such as cleaners or shoe shops; doctors; dentists, optometrists, clinics, banks, utility companies, the post office; the church. As for the enclave providing her with familiar patterns, women themselves deny this: 'Sure! They have people who speak Portuguese in the markets but their Portuguese is harder to understand than their English--and they look at you funny and you got to pretend you don't see they're laughing at your greenhorn ways.' The cuts of meats are different; products are arranged differently; and shelves are full of strange brands (which may taste totally different) and unfamiliar items. The familiar products are also much more costly than one expects and are often not the locally prized line. But there is more: Furniture styles appear cheap and ugly; appliances operate differently; the post office does not accept utility bills, and the local stationary store does not wrap and place an official seal on overseas packages. Clothing sizes carry different numbers; usual devices such as yardsticks come in meaningless units. And one does not take a container to the tavern or local dairy to purchase wine or milk. The hot and cold water taps, the light switches, the handles on the water closets are all in the wrong place and work the wrong way.

All minor things you say? But it is the totality of these minor elements which affects the quality of one's new life. We all expect 'big' differences and that expectation gives us a psychological balance about them. But the little things frustrate us simply <u>because</u> they're ordinary. They're the traits which are so commonplace we expect rationality and common-sense of them.

The woman picks up hundreds of bits of 'trivial' information which make up that quality of life which I just mentioned. And she passes this on to the rest of the family because she must learn to make do, to deal with such matters, if her family is to have their clothes washed, ironed, and mended; their meals prepared; the household to function smoothly; and their general welfare maintained in the way in which they take for granted.

For the female who is Portuguese and comes to southern New England especially, there is yet another burden. A skilled needlewoman, she is in great demand for her services by the textile and garment industries. Her male counterpart, often arriving as an unskilled agrarian worker, is frequently channeled into the most menial and lowest paying jobs, jobs which may have a pattern of intermittant employment. The female worker, however, may be working within a week of her arrival in America--working as long, more regularly, and sometimes at a higher pay scale than the males of her family. Thus, in addition to performing her traditional role within the household she is also now required to learn and perform and adjust to the same economic sphere as men. A woman who never went from the house except to visit kin, perform family-related tasks, or attend church is now expected to punch a time clock and spend 8 hours a day, 5 to 6 days a week, at the same monotonous factory task. She must be a traditional housewife and a liberated working woman--at the same time. And she must continue to defer to males while increasingly aware that her services are equally if not more economically viable.

Most importantly, whether housewife or working woman/housewife, she is expected to cope with demands made on her by her family to show 'the usual' female capacity for understanding the specific stresses individual family members face. She must know enough of each life pattern to offer

sympathy as well as practical solutions. She must adapt to new life styles and maintain old country ways--all upon demand of the various members of the household, each of whom brings a different perspective as to what innovations and which traditions he personally finds crucial to his continued well-being. In sum, one aspect of the stereotype argues that the female has less knowledge of and adapts more slowly to new socio-cultural systems, while another aspect of the same stereotypic image requires her--in her role as understanding female--to meet the new needs of her family. And what is most remarkable is that the scholarly and novelistic literature--which often pinpoints this paradox--ignores its own content and concludes that males and children acculturate quickly, but that mama is a laggard.

This flawed conclusion stems from two errors in analysis. First, only some behavior is examined in many acculturative studies and it is behavior derived from those areas where women are more conservative, while ignoring the study of those spheres in which they are highly adaptive. Equally important, the structural/functional reasons for her retention of what are termed 'significant traditional traits' are overlooked. It is true that such traits are significant--and that is exactly why she is programmed into maintaining them.

Women are not slower mentally, innately more conservative, fundamentally less adaptable, or biologically more timid and inclined to retreat to the protection of their home turf. It is far more likely that, for one thing, women are both explicitly and implicitly forced to maintain certain old country ways. It is the assurance of such comfortable, familiar behavior that offers the other family members relaxation from the acculturative strains which they face in the outside world. Home is mama's sphere and home is where one can 'let down.'

They, certainly not she, romanticize the home as a retreat from the world; they, not she, require the touchstone of the hearth. And so they, not she, structure the behavior of woman. Their perception of home as the woman's realm and their need for home to be non-demanding and familiar requires them to insist that she create an environment which allows them to relax after a day in the confusing and foreign environment of their new world. "Maria, you know I like polve [octopus] on Fridays! What is this you're giving me?' Or, 'Mama! What do you mean you want to stop wearing a bun and cut your hair?' And, very commonly, 'What do you mean you want to learn English? What for?'

The pressure for selective conservatism does not come solely from others; women themselves have pragmatic reasons for retaining some traditional patterns as adaptive strategies.

Females must try to determine which of the traditions, institutions, values, norms and patterns may and can be transferred, adapted (and how) or discarded in the new community. It is not always a simple case of rejecting the old and learning the new. The melting pot hypothesis had popularity not because it stressed homogeneity but because it dramatized the reality that many ways are incorporated into the mixture that is America, that is a life style and sociocultural system which reflect that amalgam of traits. There are many such traits to which I could call attention but one in particular deserves a closer look because, though probably not unique to the Portuguese, it is one which they have emphasized wherever they have immigrated. It is a traditional pattern which has transplanted successfully and served the immigrant well in a foreign environment. That mechanism is the institution of the cunha, using someone to 'make a connection' (see Smith, 1976, for an

expanded discussion of this). It is a pattern to which I would like to turn your attention for a few minutes.

In the new community we are anxious to establish effective ties with those around us as well as extend our social networks so as to maximize the potential for receipt of valuable information about the strange and puzzling world in which we must now survive. Without sources of information one does not know where the money is, where the security is, and where to get something for nothing--or at lowest cost. These social networks which loom so significantly for us consist of people who, potentially, can help us--economically or socially--as well as offer emotional support. When we go to someone and ask them to 'put in a plug for us with so-and-so,' to intercede for us with someone, or put us in contact with someone, we are using those people in our various networks, just as, in fact, we are often used by them.

For the Portuguese, this process is termed as having someone 'make a cunha,' and, for an immigrant it is possibly his single most important survival technique. It is also a traditional cultural pattern which the Portuguese immigrant has transferred to many other soils, and it functions as effectively in those foreign milieus as it does in its original setting--possibly because as I have said, it is not unique to the Portuguese, only more explicit and institutionalized than among other groups. The word cunha itself refers to a wedge, the sort of thing you use when trying to hold a door open, or split a solid piece of wood apart. When a Portuguese states that someone has made him a cunha he is referring to a service which an individual at his own social level has performed for him. This often consists of making contact with someone at a higher social level, someone who can do someting for Ego.

I might, for example, wish to have a rich and/or powerful person become godparent to my child. I would find some kin or friend or friend of a friend who knew that person. My intermediary would 'lay the groundwork' or 'open the door' so that I had more contact or influence with that person. Or, again, in applying for a job, I might seek a personal contact and ask that person to 'put in a good word for me,' 'put in a plug for me.'

The institution of cunha is related to the concept of network formation--those various clusters of friends, acquaintances and kin with whom one works, plays or lives, buys from or sells to.

The institution of cunha and the process of network formation are related to each other as follows:

A new arrival in a community is anxious to build up social networks since they expand his contacts at the primary level as well as broadening the number of potential secondary or link contacts. A social network is information, insurance, security, support. It offers, in short, control, potential of control--or, at least, a promise of manipulative ability. The proof of the significance of such a need is the fact that the most common expression which one hears when working in an immigrant community (as well as other communities!) is, 'It's not what you know, it's who you know'; 'and,' most Portuguese would add, 'who they know.'

And here, the positive aspects of marginality, particularly among Portuguese females, are best demonstrated. Accepting that males also have cliques to which they belong, and information accessibility as a result of that membership, women appear to have more mechanisms to control the garnering of information and the dispersal of networks. No individual has only one social network, he has many--the people on his block, the social set with whom he relaxes, the people with whom he works,

his kin group, and so on. The degree to which an individual is able to belong to different groups without having membership in one minimize his contacts in another is an important skill; one must be an integral part of any given group without that membership jeopardizing or eliminating participation with another set of individuals.

The Portuguese female immigrant is explicitly aware that she will perform a useful service for her family and, of course, herself if she maximizes the number of networks which she creates and thus the information at her disposal. She has greater access to those who can make a cunha when needed and it broadens her broadcast range when she needs to ask for assistance. The greater the number of networks to which she belongs, however, the less affiliative identity she is able to demonstrate to any single one. Often, therefore, she must tread that delicate line between the degree of commitment to and integration within a group which assures reciprocity from its members, and the degree which others will negatively perceive as an over-commitment('She is too loyal to them--she thinks more of them') or under-commitment ('She is too much of a loner,' '...too superficial'). Too much and she will be excluded from other networks; too little and she will not be accepted by any.[1]

The important point to note here is that marginality of a special kind is required if the adaptive potential of networks and thus cunha-making is to be maximized.

In conclusion, then, we have seen that immigrant women are indeed marginal but that despite this marginality--in fact, because of it--she utilizes that position in a positive fashion--especially to improve the economic potential of her family. She must adapt, except when she must not; she must place the nuclear household first, but prepared to work outside; she should carry an equal share of familial burdens but should

pay deference to the senior male as the head of the family; she must make new friends but maintain old ties; she must have access to information but should not gossip; and she must maintain her position at the core while living constantly on the fringe.

I've tried to stress that these seeming contradictions are also analyzable as alternatives--alternatives whereby immigrant women and those who depend on the functioning of women within the sociocultural system are able to extend and maximize strategies of adaptation. It is true that by concentrating on women and their status and role I have drawn an unbalanced picture, but, I repeat, this has been done to redress the imbalance of earlier studies which concentrated on males. What is proper, of course, is that all personnel in the migration process be examined with as objective a view as possible. The neglect of the role women play has given us explanations for migration dynamics based on simplistic models, incomplete data, and half-truths derived from caricatures. It is long overdue that we reject the stereotype of father in the forefront, pioneering the way, leading mother and child who sit passively in the covered wagon. If we are truly to understand one of the fundamental historical processes of human existence--the urge and the need to move on--we must place greater emphasis on the role of women. As marginal person par excellence she has used her position on the fringe to weave the torn fabric of the past to the leading edge of the future.

Footnote

[1]Although research on female networks is still in a preliminary stage due to the complexity of the research, 14 females have demonstrated that the average immigrant woman has six basic networks with reasonable exclusivity in the membership--kin (mean number equals 23), church (mean number equals 24), work (mean number equals 12), neighbors (mean number equals 23), friends (mean number equals 37), affines and friends of kin and friends (mean number equals 62). When information or assistance of any kind is needed nine of the fourteen females can affectively mobilize all six networks; two women are able to draw on at least three; and three say they can rely only on the kin network. Eight of the women were married and, comparing the list of names on husband's list (mean equals 63) and wife's (mean equals 160), on the average less than thirty percent of the names matched and those were drawn mostly from the kin network. This would seem to suggest that immigrant couples have a broader range of personnel upon whom to draw than non-immigrants in a similar socioeconomic situation (cf., Bott, 1957, for contrary data).

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